

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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|--|--|---|
| 1 NOTES OF THE MONTH                             | 10 THE GERMAN CULTURAL AND PROPAGANDA FILM, 1923-40<br><i>A discussion of Nazi methods</i> | 16 CANADIAN GOVERNMENT FILMS IN PRODUCTION                                    |
| 3 BROADCAST TO CANADA<br><i>by John Grierson</i> | 13 CORRESPONDENCE  | 16 NEWS FROM STAFFORDSHIRE<br><i>Secondary Schools' Film Association</i>      |
| 4 THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE IN WARTIME          | 13 FRANCO-BRITISH ALLIANCE<br><i>The aims of the Service d'Information de Londres</i>      | 17 BOOK REVIEWS<br><i>The Cinema Today, America at the Movies, and others</i> |
| 6 NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS                          | 15 FILM SOCIETY NEWS   | 17 PEOPLE AND PLANS   |
| 9 STORY FILM OF THE MONTH                        | 16 FOREIGN FILMS   | 18 NON-THEATRICAL FILM LIBRARIES  |
| 9 FILM OF THE MONTH FOR CHILDREN                 |  |   |

## Divided

FOR ONE short period in 1939 the whole of Wardour Street was united in a determined drive to get the tax on raw film stock removed. Wardour Street does not seem to have learnt any lesson from the success which its united forces achieved. Today we have dropped back into the old jockeying by sectional interests, and this is as true of the producers of short films as of any other section of the trade. At present the Quota, by which a certain proportion of British films must be distributed alongside the American, is under review by the Board of Trade. All sections of the film business are being consulted, and if the experience of the Board of Trade with the producers of short films is anything to go on, the task of our legislators will be a difficult one. Two groups of short film producers are opposing each other, and giving contrary advice for the solution of their problems. One section wishes the producers of films eligible for quota to spend not less than a certain fixed cost per foot on labour. An opposing section

maintains that such a cost clause would be fatal to the prosperity of the short film business.

In any circumstances, we believe that the short film can only be made to pay by ensuring a proper price for shorts from the cinemas. At present, no matter how popular the subject and treatment, or how wide the distribution, virtually no British quality short costing £1,000 a reel or more can hope to make a profit. Thus, most good shorts today are subsidised by one interest or another.

1/6 for three days' showing is a not unheard of earning for a one reel short; 3/6 is a relatively common price; and the average appears to range from 5/- to 15/- in ordinary theatres outside London.

When one remembers that the renter takes at least 30 per cent of this, and that the cost of copies, advertising and trade-show are deducted from the remaining 70 per cent, it is not surprising that short film producers look elsewhere than to the box office for money to make films.



The position is aggravated by the fact that first-class American shorts are often given away for nothing as makeweight for the programme.

Both groups of short film producers agree on the need to put a stop to throw-away prices, and a memorandum has been submitted to the Films Council, set up under the chairmanship of Sir Frederick Whyte to advise the Board of Trade. This memorandum urges that cinemas shall be compelled by law to allot a minimum percentage of their gross takings to short and second feature films. The suggested percentage is 1 per cent per reel.

### Sell British

A WHITE PAPER, *Aims and Plan of Work of the Export Council*, has just been published. The Council has been set up to co-ordinate and encourage British exports in co-operation with British industry. It seems that the new Export Council will be concerned not only with the technical and economic sides of export, but with methods of marketing. In the past, British salesmanship abroad has often been under-financed, sometimes lackadaisical and occasionally arrogant. Take it or leave it has been the unspoken comment of some British salesmen. In marketing abroad, films can play a very important part, not only in the encouragement of export but in carrying a British message all over the world. The Germans are ahead of us in this particular field. The films of the German Railway Bureau and the Die Trust, to mention only two groups, are spread over the world in many languages. To our knowledge only one major British industry has seriously tackled the question of films for overseas distribution in foreign languages; it is to be hoped that the many British industries of international importance and with agencies all over the world will follow suit.

### Russian Celebration

THE TWENTIETH anniversary of the Soviet film industry has just been celebrated by a cinema festival from February 10th to February 25th, and Serge Eisenstein contributes an article to *Moscow News* of February 19th, 1940. In spite of many rumours to the contrary, the old names appear to have taken their places alongside the new. Eisenstein briefly traces the history of the Russian movement and gives full praise to such films as Dovzhenko's *Earth*. This would appear to contradict the story that these old films have been under a cloud for some time and that the Russians are rather ashamed of them. Eisenstein rightly points to the need for Russia to articulate its present-day self; nevertheless the new films announced seem to harp as much as ever on achievements of the revolution and pre-Soviet Russia. For example, films in current production are *Karl Marx*, *Suvorov* (a great Russian soldier of the eighteenth century), and *Shaumyan* (one of the 26 Commissars shot down at Baku in the Interventionist War). However, the Moscow and Tashkent News Reel Studios announce documentary productions. Some 30 films were shown at the festival, including *We of Kronstadt*, *Soil Upturned*, *A Mighty Stream* (documentary) and *Lone White Sail*. It is a matter for comment that the anti-Nazi film *Professor Mamlock* is not mentioned, though

films of the same period receive recognition. The article ends up with a blurb:—"The Soviet Cinema continues to cherish and to further its basic distinguishing features: its profound realism, optimism, exalted aspirations, its service in the interests of the Soviet people."

### Reciprocity Wanted

THE G.P.O. FILM UNIT has taken an important step in bridging the gap between the studio and the documentary movement. David Macdonald, director of *This Man is News* and *This Man in Paris*, is to direct a film on lightships in wartime at the G.P.O., and everyone will wish him success. The G.P.O. has always pioneered, and it is good to find its inspiration continuing. We can now hope that the studios will reciprocate. It is time that a first-class British documentary director was given the financial and imaginative backing of a big commercial studio. The outlook of British studios in war would so far appear to be very similar to that in peacetime: play safe and the more hokum the better. But *The Stars Look Down* is an exception which promises well for the future.

### Break for the Newsreels

IN THESE DAYS the newsreels do not often get a break like the march of the *Graf Spee* victors through London to the Guildhall. G.B. News devoted almost their whole reel to the march, the decoration of the officers and ratings on the Horse Guards Parade, and the banquet. Splendid camera set-ups, a sense of detail in covering the reactions of the crowd, and first-class editing, gave us an item which will be long remembered by everyone who sees it; it had a dramatic shape not often seen in newsreels. The shooting of the march through the seething crowds has rarely been better done; the editing, with its simple contrast of mass effect and significant detail—the girl giving flowers to the embarrassed sailor, the relatives of the men who were killed, the steel-hatted policeman struggling to hold back the crowd—lifted the whole job into a class of its own. Everyone, the organisers of the camera positions, cameramen, sound men, editors and last, but not least, the sailors and the crowds, deserve and should receive, all praise for a splendid job.

### News Letters

SINCE THE WAR no less than three News Letters dealing with documentary films have appeared. The first was from the United States, issued by the Association of School Film Libraries. DNL started at the beginning of this year, and now we have a readable and informative News Letter published by the National Film Society of Canada, of which the January issue has just reached us.

### Exercise in Formal Logic

TWO PARIS cinemas are running *Only Angels Have Wings* and *The Lion Has Wings* simultaneously. If only angels have wings, and if the lion has wings, what is the lion?



# BROADCAST TO CANADA

By JOHN GRIERSON, Canadian Government Film Commissioner, made from Ottawa on November 30th, 1939. Reprinted by permission of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The text has been slightly abridged.

THE DAY war broke out, I was in Hollywood. I suppose everyone will remember that day in minute personal detail. It was the same on August 4th, 1914. We all sensed, like a cloud on the mind, that here was the end of one epoch, the beginning of another, and all our personal worlds might never be the same again.

On August 4th, 1914, I was on the coast of the Scottish Hebrides and the war was very near. I spent the whole day watching the trawlers and the drifters breasting the tide, puffing their way back in hundreds to become mine sweepers, and anti-submarine patrols. But on September 3rd, 1939, I was in Hollywood, 6,000 miles away from the Scottish coast, and the seat of war. No mine sweepers or anti-submarine patrols. Only white yachts, gliding along on a smooth blue Pacific. California was sunning itself on the beaches and Hollywood was behind me, the city of unreality, stardust and people's dreams.

Yet instead of feeling a world away from the war, I felt no distance at all. I knew very well that there beside me in Hollywood was one of the greatest potential munition factories on earth. There, in the vast machinery of film production, of theatres spread across the earth with an audience of a hundred million people a week, was one of the great new instruments of war propaganda. It could make people love each other or hate each other. It could keep people to the sticking point of purpose.

And that is how it is in our modern world. Like the radio and the newspaper, the film is one of the keys to men's will, and information is as necessary a line of defence as the army, the navy and the air force. The leaders responsible for the conduct of war have to ask new kinds of questions. Which nation puts its case insistently and well and makes converts and allies? Who arouses the national loyalty? Who makes purpose commanding? Who mobilizes the patrol ships of the human mind? These are vital considerations among statesmen today. In the past ten years European politics have seemed to turn on the effect of propaganda and every nation has been fighting for command of the international ether. Even the issue of the war may turn on the skill and imagination with which we formulate our aims and maintain our spirit.

That was three months ago and today the film is being mobilized like the newspaper and the radio alongside the fighting forces of the nations. Even Hollywood, far from the battlefield, was immediately affected. I never saw so great a scurry in my life as that first week of war in the chambers of Hollywood's magnates. A third of their world market had vanished overnight or become completely uncertain. Who knew when the bombs would be raining from the sky and making theatres in the European cities untenable. The black-outs had driven people from the screen romance to sit waiting by their radios for the latest war news.

Hollywood was so nervous that it had a new idea every day. The first reaction was to draw in its economic horns, make cheaper pictures, intensify its American market. There was some talk of forgetting its international role and going all American. You will see the result of that policy soon in more pictures of North American history, more pictures of South America. Hollywood even began, in a sudden burst of light, to remember that Canada was a North American country, and I am pretty sure you will see more Canadian films from Hollywood, from now on.

There was another school of thought in Hollywood which remembered the last war and how the frothier kinds of entertainment had prospered. So you heard a great deal in these first days about stopping serious pictures and giving people nothing but light-hearted ones—to permit them to forget their worries. Give them more fluff was the way Hollywood described it. But not for long. The more modern school of production, the younger men, argued vehemently in every studio. They said, I think wisely, that people would be asking more questions in this war, and that this policy of froth and fluff would be an insult to the intelligence of the people. I confess I was greatly interested to hear how seriously these younger producers talked—the men like Walter Wanger. There is no question of avoiding world responsibility, no desire whatever to forget the war and make a false paradise of neutrality. In Wanger's office, we installed a ticker service from the United Press and daily we sat around it, reading the war news, considering how best the film might serve mankind in this new situation. Everyone was for going into propaganda of some kind, but everyone I noticed was for avoiding hatred. No *Beast of Berlin* and other childish exaggerations this time, they said.\* And through all their thoughts I noticed there ran the theme "Let us do something to keep the decent human values alive. Let us so maintain men's sanity that when it comes to peace, we shall know how to make it stable."

Well, that was three months ago. Hollywood has decided on its pictures of America. It has seen how the public has accepted such war-time pictures as *U Boat 29*† and *Thunder Afloat*. It will give the people who read so much war news, the visual drama of battles in the air and on the sea. Here and there, I do not doubt, there will be frothy films to make you forget. And, watch for them, there will be the occasional film which tries to keep us sensible and sane.

But the warring nations have had to be much more direct. They have reached out, at once, to make the film their recruiting sergeant. In the newsreels they have made the film an instru-

\* Nevertheless an American film, *Hitler, The Beast of Berlin*, was trade shown in London on 2/3/40.

† American title of *The Spy in Black*.



ment of international information by which they can tell the world about their efficiency, their power, their confidence and their will to win.

You will see the new mood in two films which have just come in from England. There is not much peace in *The Warning*. It is a picture of England preparing for death and disaster; and you see the old England made grotesque by war as in a distorting mirror. There is no peace in *The Lion Has Wings*. That masterly work of film documentation is England actually at war, zooming and roaring above the clouds. It is also the film at war. And you will have more and more as the days go on. If I may make a forecast, they will be far more real, far more documentary, these films of war, than we have ever seen before from English studios.

Canada, too, is gearing her use of films to wartime necessity. The Chairman of the National Film Board announced the other day that an ambitious film on Canada's mobilization had been initiated. That you will see, I expect, in the exciting form which *March of Time* gives to its treatment of world events; and all the world will see it. I hope we shall see too the economic mobilization of this country which makes Canada the power house behind the Allies.

And now I want to say a word about information and propaganda which is in all our minds at this moment. I have been for a long time interested in propaganda, and it is as a propagandist, I have been from the first interested in films. I remember coming away from the last war with the very simple notion in my head that somehow we had to make peace exciting, if we were to prevent wars. Simple notion as it is, that has been my propaganda ever since—to make peace exciting. In one form or another I have produced or initiated hundreds of films; yet I think behind every one of them has been that one idea, that the ordinary affairs of people's lives are more dramatic and more vital than all the false excitements you can muster. That has seemed to me something worth spending one's life over.

I should be an unhappy person if I thought all this had vanished with the war. But strangely enough, the war has only seemed to accentuate people's hunger for reality. It is proper that the film should take its place in the line of defence, as in duty bound. It is proper that it should use its powers to mobilize the full effort of the nation. But one way, too, in which we can maintain our defences and keep our spirit for the struggle ahead, is to remember that the aims of our society

lie beyond war and in the love of peace. It will be a poor information service which keeps harping on war to the exclusion of everything so that our minds become narrow and anæmic. It will be a poor propaganda which teaches hatred, till it violates the sense of decency and democracy which ten thousand years of civilisation have established. It will be an inefficient national information which does not keep the home fires of national activity burning, while the men are off to the war. In war as in peace, strength lies in hope, and it will be the wisest propaganda which keeps men rich in hope.

I only know this—that war will have achieved its final feat of destructiveness, and we shall have been brought to the very brink of spiritual suicide, if we lose the sense of what we are defending.

But on this serious question of the relation of peace thoughts and war thoughts, I am going to quote from another authority—the great French writer, Giraudoux. He is today director of the French Ministry of Information. Addressing the children of France the other day at the opening of their school year, he said:

"Thirty-eight thousand of your teachers have had to take machine gun, bomb and grenade and all the abhorred tools of destruction to form a rampart behind which you will be sheltered this winter—to learn from the masters left to you—and from your school books—your country's inviolable love of peace. . . .

"Young sentinels, learn a true history, a true geography, a moral without hatred, lessons in things which have nothing to do with gunpowder and bayonets."

So there you have it. There are two sides to propaganda, and two sides to the film at war. We shall go on mobilizing the film to give the news and the story of a great historical event. In that sense we shall use it for all its worth to secure the present. But we shall also, I hope and trust, use the film more and more to secure the future and serve the still wider needs of the people of Canada. War films, yes, but more films, too, about the every-day things of life, the values, the ideals which make life worth living. We shall use the film, I hope, to give visual significance to the words of the Canadian Prime Minister when he said that the spirit of mutual tolerance and the respect for fundamental human rights are the foundation of the national unity of Canada.

In that way we may rescue, from these barren days of trouble, something we can hand on to the future.

## THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE IN WARTIME

An Officer of the Institute discusses its Work and Aims over the first Six Months of the War.

MORNING OF Saturday, September 2nd, 1939: Peace. The British Film Institute is at work "encouraging the use and development of the Cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction."

Morning of Monday, September 4th: The British Film Institute is still forwarding its aims and objects, but with certain significant differences.

There was, for example, the question of evacuation. Hundreds of thousands of children had moved out into the country. The schools were overcrowded and working double shifts, teachers were harassed, billeting arrangements were often far from satisfactory. The film, educational and entertainment, provided an ideal way of keeping the "refugees" quiet and happy for at least a few hours every day.



Plans for such an emergency as this had already been worked out and those that could be undertaken with the Institute's own limited funds were immediately put into operation. Over a long period the Institute had been booking and arranging programmes of films for prisons and Borstal institutions; this service was now extended to cover all schools which cared to take advantage of it. The result was overwhelming: from all over the country pleas came in for programmes, for advice, for help, a flood of enquiries which grew steadily as the advantages of a central booking service became fully realised. At the same time the Institute endeavoured to the best of its power to secure the removal of projectors from the empty schools in the evacuated areas to those places where they could be of best use.

This service, of course, only touched the fringe of the problem, but for more to be done additional money was needed. In the South a comprehensive scheme which would, perhaps, have solved the whole problem of the educational film in schools and set this branch of the industry on its feet was submitted to the Board of Education. Although approved in principle, it was not considered that the expense was justifiable at a time of national emergency. A very modified version of this original scheme has, however, just been approved in the shape of an "educational films campaign" which will be described more fully later in this article.

Meanwhile in the North the Institute's Branch in Scotland, the Scottish Film Council, secured from the Ministry of Information a small grant of £1,200 spread over three months. With this it organised at a moment's notice, with the co-operation of the Scottish Educational Film Association, a service of travelling film shows for evacuated school children. In the three months the scheme lasted, in spite of appalling weather conditions, lack of electric current and other difficulties, nearly 1,500 shows were given to some quarter of a million children. In this short period it is safe to say that the educational film movement in Scotland had been given a tonic the effects of which will be evident for years to come. All this work could not have been achieved without the willing assistance of the Glasgow, Edinburgh and other Education Authorities, who seconded teachers and lent apparatus, and the fortunate existence of the British Film Institute's Scottish Central Educational Film Library set up last year with a grant from the Carnegie Trustees.

In the South the modified version of the Institute's original scheme (mentioned above) came into being when on March 7th an official circular from the Board of Education to Local Education Authorities announced that the Board had "approved a proposal made by the British Film Institute that an intensive film campaign, extending over about six months, should be conducted by the Institute with the advice and assistance of the Board."

It is too early yet to judge the results of this scheme, which involves the employment of four teachers on the Institute's staff, all of whom have had years of experience in the use of educational films. Their job is to approach Directors of Education, teachers and others in order to demonstrate the value of this new aid to instruction, to give courses in sub-

standard projection and in general to "preach the gospel". The present arrangements are flexible and can be adjusted to meet any given circumstances, but the sum at the disposal of the Institute for the carrying on of the campaign is very limited, being merely an additional grant from the Privy Council out of the Sunday Cinematograph Fund. Any comments or help which readers of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER who are interested in educational films can give will be welcomed.

Well before even the 1938 crisis the Governors of the British Film Institute were pressing for the recognition of the film—and particularly the short film and newsreel—as one of the best possible means of "putting Britain across" in the eyes of the world. Only too well aware of the astonishingly potent work being done by Germany in this connection, they gave private demonstrations of foreign propaganda films to high Government officials on more than one occasion in the early months of 1939, while the Director himself visited Berlin to gain first-hand information. And ever since the beginning of the war the Institute has fought behind the scenes for more facilities for cameramen, for greater imagination in high quarters and for greater distribution of what films Britain's long suffering producers were allowed to make. Officially, the Governors have submitted a Memorandum to the Films Council pointing out the urgent value of the short film, while they have also approached the principal Government Departments asking that a lead should be given to British producers as to the type of entertainment film the Government would like to see made. In addition the vital necessity of seeing that Britain is adequately represented on Dominion and Colonial screens and *vice versa* has not been lost sight of, and as a result of certain representations that have been made on behalf of the Institute it is possible that some action may be taken towards setting up what might be described as an "Imperial Films Committee" as a step towards settling this problem.

On the cultural side, the activities of the Institute are being well maintained. Probably the most important of these is the continued encouragement of the International Federation of Film Archives which, war or no war, continues to form an ideal means for the interchange of cultural or historic films between the United States, Great Britain, France and Switzerland. It is also interesting to note that Germany, since America and Switzerland are neutrals, also remains a member, although naturally no contact is now possible between the National Film Library and the Reichsfilmarchiv in Berlin. The Secretary of the British Film Institute is Treasurer and Vice-President of the Federation.

In addition, the International Convention for the Circulation of films of an educational character has been ratified by the British Government at the Institute's request. New vaults have been built for the National Film Library, and new films of a cultural or historical character are being steadily added. The Institute's periodical, *Sight and Sound*—which has a very large circulation abroad—is being continued not only because of its interest to intelligent filmgoers but also because it helps to show neutral countries that the United Kingdom, war or no war, can maintain its interest in the film as an art.



# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

✓ **Point of View No. 5. Drifting in Danger.** Production: Spectator Short Films. Distribution: Denning Films. 17 minutes.

HERE, once again, is Mr Ivan Scott keeping the peace between Mr Pro and Mr Con and finishing up by asking us in the audience what we think. In this latest release the argument is about the plight of the herring industry and whether the 1935 policy of the Herring Industry Board was right or wrong. Unfortunately the well-documented views of Mr Pro and Mr Con suffer from untidy arrangement, and the scenes chosen to illustrate them do little to clarify or reinforce the verbal contentions. The relationship between spoken word and visual image is often clumsy to the point of incomprehensibility.

In general, *Point of View* is to be congratulated on its choice of subjects, for there is still powerful opposition in the film trade and in the censor's office to the presentation of controversial issues on the screen. It is a pity that, in order to disarm any criticism of subject-matter, a style of presentation has been evolved which is in danger of representing controversy itself as a somewhat comic English pastime, an end in itself rather than a means of arriving at valuable conclusions. The highly artificial conventions of a *Point of View* debate forbid the stating of conclusions in the film and the audience may be forgiven if they feel no stimulus to draw any of their own; a poor result for a series which presumably sets out to entertain by facilitating wider public participation in the solving of topical problems.

Apart from the handicap imposed by its framework of three men at a table (and the box office value of always repeating this theme-scene may easily be exaggerated), *Point of View* occasionally sees other reasons for omitting essential factors in its controversies. The question of distribution costs and middlemen's profits is not debated in the current issue on depression in the herring industry. It was a pity Mr Con did not ask just how an unpretentious London restaurant comes to charge three shillings for a pair of grilled herrings.

✓ **The Republic of Finland.** Production: March of Time (No. 11, Fifth Year). Distribution: R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 18 minutes.

FINLAND is a subject with which *March of Time* has already dealt on an earlier occasion, and it is obvious that there was no possibility of obtaining fresh and exclusive material in Finland in time for inclusion in this new issue. The war scenes are indeed the same as those we have seen in the newsreels; and the remainder of the Finnish material is composed of well-shot scenes of Finland's peacetime activities (including a monumental shot of Sibelius) and a certain amount of historical material.

One hesitates to accuse an excellent series like the *March of Time* of anything in the nature of padding, but the Cook's Tour of Washington's embassies with which this item begins appears to have little relevance to the main argument, except in so far as the Russian and Finnish representatives are concerned.

The argument of the film is, however, clearly stated, and does not diverge in any way from the general attitude of the press. In general, it may be said that this item, though highly topical and therefore box office, is not in the first line of *March of Time* effort.

✓ **Island People.** Production: Realist Film Unit for British Council. 10 minutes.

By an American

ISLAND PEOPLE, a neat little documentary, grapples with an interesting problem. Intended for neutral consumption, it is a production of British minds untainted by foreign viewpoint. As such it demands close inspection, careful criticism. Herewith the verdict of a neutral tainted by contact with the British.

The film is built up on a nice formula. I approached the British Isles by way of a map, an air view of the countryside, and assorted general views. Then I settled down to a few examples of Britons and what they do. Done with them, I wound up with a quick summary, and it was all over.

As propaganda it has virtues. It is quiet, not obviously pushing, seems an attempt to explain England simply. Its faults are not great, but are several. I feel that a spoken commentary of calm, dispassionate British understatement should be effective as propaganda, but that commentary, to be most successful, should be accompanied by visual overstatement. (Someone says in hurt tones: "That's hardly British, old man!" But if it's to be propaganda, why not superlative propaganda?) The photography was workmanlike, but quite unexciting.

Direction and cutting were jerky at the film's start, but settled down later. For me the film was too simple. England just can't be as simple as she was here painted. The England I know is an industrial nation. In the film the stress was heavier on agriculture than on industry. The choice of a farmer boy, a woman clinician, the captain of a merchantman, a secretary and a silversmith as examples of the English did not seem typical to me.

Thank God, though, for an English documentary without the usual tortuous panoramic meanderings about the landscape. There was not the usual time to be wasted, for a lot of material was crowded into this film. I liked the emphasis on craftsmanship in the case of the silversmith. And thanks for a nice bit of light music that popped up momentarily midfilm. I liked *Island People*. It just could have been a lot better. Maybe the others in this series will answer all my arguments.

By a film industry executive

*Island People* is a welcome and much-needed addition to documentary lists. Documentary, as I see it, has two objectives; first, to interpret the social scene, and second, to interpret it to the widest possible number of people. *Island People* satisfied the first objective and will, I am certain, satisfy the second. There are no technical fireworks or heavy-footed and academic excursions into sociology. The film is simple and emotion-

ally warm. It does not look at "the masses" from the outside. *Island People* is more than an account of how the British people live, though this is its *raison d'être*: it is a story of how common people live and work all over the world. The Realist Film Unit have put themselves on such terms with ordinary people that they are doing the very best work for documentary.

I searched for an adjective to describe this film, but there is only one that fits it, and that is "artless"—artless in the same way that a poem by Herrick, or a painting by Botticelli is pure and artless.

✓ **Handicraft Happiness, Rugmaking, Quilting, Thrift.** Production: G.B. Instructional. Direction: Mary Field. Photography: Peter Herbert. Distribution: Non-theatrical. 16 mm. silent, except for *Handicraft Happiness*, of which there is a 16 mm. sound version. Each film runs for approximately 10 minutes.

By a woman

THESE FOUR films have been made for the Women's Institutes to encourage countrywomen to relearn the crafts which were the pride of their great-grandmothers. As the first series of films to be made at the request of the Institutes they represent an important development in the use of film in education. Except for *Handicraft Happiness* they are unpretentious straightforward demonstration films made with a strict eye on the cost. G.B. Instructional have shot on 16 mm. film so skilfully that it looks every bit as good as 35 mm.

One of the difficulties of making such things as sewing or rugmaking look attractive on the screen is that you have to sit down to the work. The only movement is in the hands and the chief interest is in the design of the stitches. Although I am not able to face a darn with equanimity myself, I was fascinated by the details of thread and finger work. The women's hands quilting the traditional feather pattern, the cross stitches which go to make a rug—these are the things which please the eye and encourage the ignorant.

*Quilting* is the best of the series for this reason. It shows how the work is done. *Thrift* and *Rugmaking* rely a little too much on pictures of women bending over their work with great patience and determination. And they did look determined. It would have been a relief to see a younger face among them.

All the fine things which the Women's Institutes make are not show-pieces; they are made to be used. Yet no one walked on the hand-woven rug, no child slept in the cot made of sackcloth, no one lay on the home-tufted mattress. There should have been some attempt to show how these things would add to the comfort and pleasure of the family.

*Handicraft Happiness* serves as an introduction to the other three films. It begins in an eighteenth century farmhouse, brings in the factory system with a good blast on a siren, and shows the modern woman going to town by bus to buy her provisions. But the machine may not turn out goods to suit her purse or her individual wants.



At the Women's Institutes, she can learn to make what she needs to her own design.

These films have the difficult job of persuading women to do things which are outside their ordinary household routine. They are not intended to take the place of teaching and individual teachers will find them easy to adapt to their own methods.

**Home Front.** Production: Co-operative Society of London. Direction: Jiri Weiss. Distribution: Theatrical and Non-Theatrical. 35 mm. and 16 mm. 19 minutes.

JIRI WEISS is the Czech director of *The Rape of Czechoslovakia*, and *Home Front* is the first documentary he has directed in Britain. To survey British democracy under the auspices of the London Co-operative Society was a good break for any beleaguered democrat, possibly too good, for the result is without sufficient logic to swing the reactionary into the line of thought desired by producers and director. There are too many old symbols—the bloated profiteer, in particular. Weiss's profiteer, however, is unique in that at the words "Get Out", three times repeated, he literally disappears. It is just as pretty to watch as Ali Baba saying "Open Sesame", but in real life devils just don't vanish that way.

All the same it is exciting to see Czech imagination making whoopee with staid old documentary film technique. At times the whoopee is slightly embarrassing, as when folk pour down into an air raid shelter to the accompaniment of a sepulchral "War! War! War!" spoken in so bass a voice as almost to be off the record. But at other times, especially when children are on the screen (remember the children of *The Rape of Czechoslovakia*?), and when, for example, a brimming sugar-bowl is replaced by the statutory two lumps, to the acute distress of a sweet-toothed coffee-drinker, the fantasy combines with real human understanding and is an object lesson for most of us.

**London River.** Production: British Films for British Council. Distribution: Travel and Industrial Development Association. 10 minutes.

LONDON RIVER, the Port of the World, with its forty-five miles of wharves and quays, is that part of the Thames which begins at London Bridge. This new film adds for full measure a brief trip via the City to the Houses of Parliament, but, rightly enough, it does it almost surreptitiously, as if in concession to the overseas audiences who will expect to see some of the more familiar sights of the Metropolis.

*London River* is unpretentious enough not to attempt to do anything more than give you a rapid run around. It never becomes so intimate as to park you on the balcony of "The Prospect of Whitby" or to introduce you to the Rotherhithe stevedores who are all-in wrestlers in their spare time. It contents itself with meandering up and down the river and showing you the docks where the various imports and exports are handled, interspersed with a few well-known landmarks such as the Royal Naval College.

The commentary is suitably detached, and there is a continuous musical background.

**Sport at the Local.**

**The Gift of Health.**

Production: Cameo Features Ltd. Direction: James Carr. Distribution: Theatrical. 20 minutes.

OVER THE past few years there has been a trickle of little films about everyday life as the common man knows and enjoys it. Lowenstein's *Reporter in Soho* was a case in point. And now we have *Sport at the Local*, a film about pub games. The subject matter is charming; one feels as if one were in the pub oneself, and there can be no higher praise than this. A. P. Herbert's commentary is informative and intimate. Unfortunately it is not balanced properly against the picture; simultaneous claims are made on the eye and the ear which are irreconcilable.

*The Gift of Health* deals with the Papworth Settlement for after-treatment of tuberculosis, and shows the way in which convalescence from this disease can be associated with useful work. The film is to be distributed theatrically, but we hope that it will become available non-theatrically in due course. It would make a valuable addition to any film library on medicine and hygiene.

**Backyard Front.** Production: British Films Ltd. Direction: Andrew Buchanan. Players: Claude Dampier and Mr Middleton. Distribution: Theatrical. 20 minutes.

*By a farmer*

THIS FILM—commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture—has been made presumably to encourage householders to cultivate vegetables in their backyards, and to instruct unskilled cultivators in the best way to set about it. It may be stated clearly that it fails in both its objects. The idea of using two such popular figures as Claude Dampier and Mr Middleton is doubtless sound, but it is doubtful if the amateur gardener likes to be equated with the blithering idiot portrayed so charmingly by Mr Dampier, and it is regrettable that the chance to give information has been neglected for music-hall horseplay. Few people when digging their garden are liable to be seriously embarrassed by getting their gas masks entangled with a clothes horse, yet from the amount of time spent over it in the film one would imagine that this was one of the chief banes of backyard gardening. The same spirit of knockabout pervades the film, varied occasionally by incomplete and inaccurate information that is in any case so badly presented that no memory of it is liable to remain with the audience. It would be tedious to examine every error, but as an example one can cite the instance of the compost heap. Mr Middleton explains that we must have one as, owing to the lack of horse traffic, we cannot get the old-fashioned manure. This statement is not explained in any way and is, I imagine, meaningless to many of the uninstructed who might justifiably ask why, if we lack horse traffic, we must have a compost heap, and require to be told what to do with it once we have it. No mention is made of the simple way of hastening decomposition by watering the heap with Condry's fluid; and when Mr Dampier exhibits his own heap composed mostly of broken

crockery and worn out saucepans, it is not considered worth while to point out that these things should never on any account be thrown on the compost heap.

**Colloids in Medicine.** Production: Merton Park Studios. Producer: Cecil Musk. Direction: M. F. Cooper. Photography: T. R. Thumwood. Distribution: British Colloids Ltd. 35 mm. and 16 mm. 20 minutes.

*By a teacher*

THE TITLE of this film is rather misleading. One would expect to see the medicinal applications of colloids; instead much of the film is devoted to the general preparation and properties of colloids. It opens with Graham explaining to a visitor the difference between colloids and crystalloids. Following this are shown such phenomena as Brownian movement and the Tyndall cone effect. In connection with the former the principle of the ultra-microscope is briefly explained. Colloids are shown being prepared first by a "breaking-down" process—Bredig's method, and secondly, by a "building-up" process from solutions. The precipitation of colloids by electrolytes and oppositely-charged colloids is admirably presented. The use of colloidal medicines is illustrated by their ability, when injected into the blood stream, of remaining within the circulating system.

The film concludes with views of the laboratory where these medicines are prepared and shows many of the prepared medicines themselves. Although it was made by a firm which prepares colloidal medicines, the propaganda is kept well to the background. The photography is good and the accompanying commentary leaves nothing to be desired. The experiments are well set out and labelled. Altogether a film that should interest all audiences and prove of great value in the teaching of colloids in schools.

**Planned Electrification.** Production: Merton Park Studios. Direction: Marcus Cooper. Distribution: Non-theatrical. 16 mm. 30 minutes.

*By an engineer*

THE FILM describes the replacement of an obsolete steam plant at a colliery pit-head by a completely electrical installation.

After a few shots of the old system in operation, the new scheme is briefly outlined against the background of the contractors' works at Trafford Park. Subsequently the new scheme is recapitulated in some detail, particular emphasis being placed on the safety devices controlling skip and cage hoisting and on the operation of an 11-ton flywheel, the kinetic energy of which supplies part of the peak torque required for rapid acceleration of the cage. Although the scientific principle underlying the operation of the latter unit is fairly well explained, the presentation might have been improved by gradually elaborating the detail of the unit from elementary diagrams. A similar criticism may be levelled against the demonstration of the electrical interlocking; one or two of these units described in detail from elementary principles would have been more valuable than the complete outline shown.



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STORY FILM OF  
THE MONTH

## SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE

By a Film Critic

WITH THE United States averting its somewhat self-righteous gaze from European problems and turning increasing attention, part complacently, part anxiously, to its own democratic traditions, it is no surprise to find two films produced within a short period on the life of Abraham Lincoln. Following Henry Fonda's impersonation comes a film version of Robert E. Sherwood's Pulitzer Prize play, *Abraham Lincoln in Illinois*. It is a biography of Lincoln from early manhood to the day of his departure for the White House and it must rank amongst the best historical films ever made.

*Spirit of the People* is cheaply produced and technically unremarkable. It is without spectacular scenes or great star names; one principal player's voice records badly and in more than one scene the characters manœuvre for position like stage amateurs worried that Aunt Milly may have a bad view. Yet this film gets nearer to the heart of America than any previous attempts. We know, more surely than if an army of de Milles had shown it to us, that a nation in the making is recorded here. We know it because the people we see facing the threat of the American Civil War are real people arguing out in terms of human strength and human weakness the inevitably tragic solution to the dispute on slavery which came near to destroying the United States.

In setting out to tell the story of the growth of a nation in terms of the individual development of a small group of people the film sets itself a task which would be impossible without brilliant characterisation and dialogue. The problem of dialogue has been solved by calling on the genius of the greatest orator in the English language, for a high proportion of the dialogue is taken from Lincoln's own speeches. The problem of characterisation has been solved by first-rate acting and, more importantly, by a really honest attempt to use historical records, not to portray as little of a character as may be demanded by the narrow limits of a conventional plot, but to portray the whole character. Raymond Massey's performance as Lincoln is so good that it is difficult to remember him in his previous parts. It is not hard to grow older from reel to reel, but here we see also the development of Lincoln's political sagacity and the hardening of his convictions. We watch his oratorical style grow from the simple local anecdote to the parable that can shake a nation.

But it is Lincoln's film, not Massey's, and Abe himself would have approved, with a twinkling eye, the sly changes which Mr Sherwood has made here and there in his immortal words to point a topical moral. For has not Mr Sherwood said again to the world on Abraham Lincoln's behalf these challenging words:—"We have gained democracy, now to find we may be unfit to keep it."

FILM OF THE MONTH FOR CHILDREN  
PINOCCHIO

A Walt Disney feature production in Multiplane Technicolour. Distribution: R.K.O. Radio Pictures. Certificate U.

By an educationalist

THE difficulty of making films of books is that the audience often has individual and preconceived ideas of how all the characters ought to look. A fairy tale is an even more difficult proposition because there is a certain vagueness in most people's conception of a fairy, or an elf, or a fox that talks. When the artist crystallises the conception he often shatters the mist which so helpfully protects our imaginings. He creates something which we refuse to recognise.

Perhaps that is why Disney has chosen a less well-known fairy tale for his second full length colour cartoon. The chances are you have not read "Pinocchio". If, however, you have read it you will know that it reads like a ready-made Walt Disney scenario. Pinocchio is a puppet; there are animals who talk and behave like humans and there are adventures at the bottom of the sea as well as in mythical lands where bad boys have the time of their lives. If you have read the story you will also know that it is sadly lacking in humour and is much too consciously moral for this generation.

Disney's job is, therefore, to tell this Disneyesque story without shattering our imaginings. He has also to add a little saving humour. Disney being Disney does all this and he does it mainly by imagining things in a fashion that leaves our own imaginations at the starting post. The story is faithfully told with a few main characters and an endless invention of detail. It is full of a spontaneous and unflagging element of surprise. Incidental humour creeps in but the high moral tone is happily vulgarised in the person of Mr Jiminy Cricket, a new character introduced by Disney. He will take his place at the top of the class, which includes Donald Duck, Dopey, and Goofey. He is the most human of all the Disney eccentrics; he stands for moral tone but is human enough to make it bearable. The fox who plays the part of the broken down actor is superb and looks rather like W. C. Fields giving an impression of John Barrymore.

The few human characters are eccentrics and therefore Disney is spared the embarrassment of trying to make life-like characters. His good fairy, the most mortal looking of all, manages to be as unlike *Snow White* as possible and in this Disney skates over his thinnest ice.

Technically the film is a big advance, not only on *Snow White* but on all the other cartoons and colour novelties which lie behind us in the last few years. The colour has a new brilliance and the sense of perspective and depth in the multiplane sequences is superior to anything we have seen before.

The story, being a series of adventures, gives Disney fresh opportunities with it in locale, and

he has to change his basic colour schemes several times. Two sequences especially make high-water marks in cartoon and colour work. The first is a theatre scene in a puppet show; here Pinocchio makes his bid for fame as an actor in an atmosphere full of colour and movement; it is like turning the pages of a picture book designed by a celestial scenic artist. The second highlight is the sequence under the sea when Pinocchio goes in search of his father, who has been swallowed by a whale. The father now lives in an old hulk in the whale's belly. Pinocchio sets out to find the whale and there follows a sequence of entrancing beauty, made mysterious by the half lights on deep water; decorated by exotic fish of all colours and distinguished by one of the gayest experiments in sound which we have heard. The voices under water are carried by bubbles which break up the even flow into a tintinnabulating trickle. The whale turns out to be the biggest thing you ever saw and as Jiminy Cricket is probably the smallest, the fun is on.

By a schoolboy aged 11 (Raynes Park County School)

I THINK the cartoon film *Pinocchio* was very good indeed. It is the best cartoon I have ever seen. It had a good motto behind it, "Always distinguish right from wrong". Pinocchio was funny in all his actions. Jiminy Cricket, made Pinocchio's conscience by the Blue Fairy, was the funniest character in the film. I think so, because he was so small, and was able to hide in very small things such as flowers and jamjars. He could run at a terrific pace, once he started. Monstro the whale was just the opposite in size, but not in speed. I liked the part where Jiminy Cricket balanced on Monstro's eyelash. The fish were very pretty. The two pets of Geppetto (a woodcarver) were a kitten called Figaro and a goldfish called Cleo, although they did not speak they responded to all conversation by action. I think the best song was "When you wish upon a star".

The two comic villains, J. Worthington Foulfellow, the fox, and Gideon, the cat, were very amusing when they captured Pinocchio, and when J. Worthington Foulfellow kept on using his walking stick to get him round the neck and pull him back. Gideon did not look much like a cat: he looked more like a lion with the long hair reaching down to his shoulders.

A very amusing part was where the Blue Fairy appeared, when Pinocchio was a prisoner in a cage, and questioned him. Every lie he told his nose grew longer and longer until leaves grew on it. But soon he told the truth and the fairy released him from the cage. I liked the look on Pinocchio's face when he saw that he had donkey's ears and a tail. He made use of his tail by tying a stone to it, so as he could reach the bottom of the sea. The colours of the sea flowers were very beautiful. I liked the enormous number of clocks, with funny men and birds acting to chime the hour. The woodcarver's watch was also funny.



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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## THE GERMAN CULTURAL AND PROPAGANDA FILM, 1923-40

This article is written by a German film director, now in Britain, who was closely associated with the German Documentary movement up till the outbreak of war.

### PART 1. PRODUCERS AND DIRECTORS

WHEN APPROACHING the German cultural film, it is necessary to distinguish the two periods of development before and after the Nazis took over in January, 1933. Between 1927 and 1930 a large audience in Germany, interested in documentary films, had been created; this enabled the German documentary film to develop. In spite of this public interest in a new kind of cinema, the German commercial film companies, like their opposite numbers all over the world, did not offer employment to the young, capable and imaginative men who were interested in developing the German cinema along new lines.

These young men, therefore, turned their efforts to the field of the documentary film. In 1930 the first plans emerged for improving the production and distribution basis of such films. The producers formed an organisation called "*Lehrfilmbund*" (Alliance of Educational Film Producers). The word "educational" rather than "documentary" was chosen because the biggest business of most documentary producers was with films of the former kind. Many films were produced for the State Institute for Education for distribution to schools, universities, clubs and so on.

The *Lehrfilmbund* wished to enrol all documentary film producers. Its aims were:

1. A fixed minimum rental for all educational and documentary films.
2. Abolition of the double feature programme. (Both exhibitors and renters agreed to this.)
3. Compulsory inclusion of one documentary film in each cinema performance.
4. State subsidy for films of national importance.
5. Certificates for films of distinctive merit.
6. Reduction of exhibitors' entertainment tax for showing such films.

By the end of 1930 some of these aims had been achieved. The Government Censor recognised the distinction between "*volksbildend*" (instructive for everyone) and "*Lehrfilm*" (educational film). This resulted in the entertainment tax being reduced by a third for the whole programme if a documentary film with a certificate of approval were included. Naturally this was an inducement to the exhibitor to show documentaries though there was no compulsion. The other aims of the *Lehrfilmbund* were not achieved. Most of the documentary producers joined the Association, but distributors were not forced to buy their films from its members. The minimum price for selling films by members was fixed at 10 marks per metre (about 3s. 4d. per foot). But producers outside the Association began to sell to distributors at a competitive price so that the members were forced to sell their films under the agreed rate.

### Ufa before the Nazis

Before the Nazis came into power, the biggest producer of educational films was the Ufa Company. As early as 1923 Ufa had set up its own cultural department, with Dr Grieving as manager and Dr Nicholas Kaufmann as chief producer. (They are still in charge today.) Many of its films, such as *Ways to Health and Beauty*, *Creative Hands*, *Steel* and *Turbulent Timber*, were frequently shown abroad. Ufa was also the largest distributor and owner of cinemas. Between 1928 and 1933 it increased its holding of theatres from 200 to 350. It had quite early recognised the disadvantages of the double-feature programme and had started showing one documentary film in some of its theatres. Later it showed documentary films in all its theatres, though other cinemas retained the two feature habit. Ufa refused to buy documentary films from outside producers and made them itself. In this it had many advantages over the small producer. Knowing from its own feature production schedule the number of documentary films it would need each year, it could plan its documentary programme much more easily than the small producer, who did not know if his film would sell till after he had finished it. Moreover, Ufa realised that it could make films for the State Educational Film Institute very cheaply, since it had access to a very large library of film shots; in consequence, it soon became the chief supplier to the Institute—another blow for the independent small producer.

### The Nazis take Power

When the Nazis took control of the film industry, the independent documentary producers hoped that the monopoly of Ufa would be broken sufficiently to open up the field to all. At first it seemed that they were right. The *Lehrfilmbund* was dissolved and its members transferred to the newly-created *Reichsfilmkammer* (Government Chamber for films). This was to lead and manage the whole German film business. A special department for documentary film producers was set up. By degrees the major points in the programme of the *Lehrfilmbund* were recognised. Documentary films were graded as educational films, films of general instruction, films of special artistic merit, and films important for their cultural and political aspects. Highest of all grades was the film that combined artistic and political merit. The double-feature programme was made illegal and every performance had to include a documentary. The reduction of the entertainment tax was maintained, and when a film was given the highest certificate of merit this reduction was doubled and the film could in cer-



tain instances be shown free of tax all together. A minimum selling price of 10 marks per metre was fixed, though experts maintained that quality productions could not be made at this figure. However, the distributors declared that it was impossible to pay more. Every producer of documentary films had to be a member of the *Reichsfilmkammer*, and candidates were carefully chosen, membership of the Nazi party being a principal consideration. The *Reichsfilmkammer* offered promises and even real help. It negotiated for distribution and tried to prevent the big combines making all the required documentary films themselves.

In these ways the Nazis recognised that the small documentary producer had to be helped and that his individuality had made the German documentary film what it was. But this was not to last. The Nazis betrayed their proclaimed aims and broke their promises. The big combines remained as powerful as ever, and a new one entered the field—Tobis.

At this point it must be explained that German documentary films often contained an indirect propaganda message, and were sponsored in the same way as many British documentary films. Such films were made by big industrial companies, towns, provinces, Government Departments, and others. Examples are the Ruttman films of cities—*Düsseldorf*, *Stuttgart*, and *Stettin*, and the expensive steel film for Vereinigte Stahlwerke. Technically, these films were often extremely good; there was ample money and, unless the propaganda were concealed by artistic handling, the Censor would not award a certificate of merit. Between 45% and 50% of all German documentary films from 1935 to 1939 originated in this way.

This type of film making was one of the main lines of the Ufa company. Out of 80 documentary films made by Ufa in 1938, 45 were so financed. None of these films cost less than about £3,000, and many much more.

Tobis was satisfied that it could get as high prices for its product as Ufa. It was able to give the same service and could guarantee up to 10,000 showings owing to its various distribution tie-ups. The small documentary producer viewed these manoeuvres with apprehension. With no chain of cinemas behind him, he feared annihilation. However, Ufa attacked the new Tobis venture, and its documentary department was closed in 1938.

#### Ufa a Monopoly

This success on the part of Ufa was not due wholly to business astuteness; the company was helped by the Nazi Government. At an early stage of their power the Nazis had forced the big film companies to sell their shares to the Government, even though some shareholders, such as Herr Hugenberg, who owned the big newspaper concern *Scherl* as well as the Ufa company, opposed this. Dr Winkler, the former mayor of the city of Thorn, and one time socialist deputy in the Reichstag, was chosen to buy the shares. He was directly responsible to Dr Goebbels, who thought that if the film industry were centred in a few big firms it would be easier to control.

Thus Ufa gained the monopoly in the documentary film industry. Following the events of 1938, it had to produce 80 films for its own use as well as 50 for Tobis each year. The propaganda department was responsible for about 60 of these, but, even with its large resources, Ufa alone could not produce the remaining 70. So the documentary department opened another section to deal with films supplied by independent producers. These numbered about 35 films a year. This meant that the Ufa documentary department had three distinct groups—ordinary documentary films, the commissions of advertising customers and the films of independent producers. Control was in the hands of a managing director who was directly responsible to the company. There was a separate under-manager for each of the two production sections, assisted by a chief and two assistant producers. The department had 25 film directors in all, drawing salaries ranging between 500 and 2,000 marks each. Besides these, there were some 30 cameramen with another 30 assistants using 40 cameras, 10 cutters and about 30 girls for editing purposes. There were also two well-equipped studios, two fixed and four mobile sound-trucks, and a scenario department with 30 writers. No other company had such an elaborate equipment and personnel.

#### The Reichsfilmkammer Declines

From 1938 the *Reichsfilmkammer* became insignificant. At this date its membership numbered 250. They all called themselves "producers of documentary films". In reality, only a few could justifiably use this name. When it is realised that the average yearly demand for documentary films was met largely by Ufa from 1938 onwards, it can be seen how few independent producers were really working. Only about 50 independent producers were known to be fully engaged.

These 50 represent those who were concerned with the German documentary film in its infancy. Best known of these is Walther Ruttmann, who made *Berlin, Melody of the World*, and others, although his recent films have only been repetitions of his earlier work. Mention should also be made of Hans Boehner, Wilfred Basse, Dr Hans Cuelis, Hans Doring, Dr Johannes Guter, Karl Junghans (whose speciality was the microfilm), Dr Nicholas Kaufmann, Dr Martin Rikkli, Hubert Schonger and Max Weid. All these men (except Basse) are veterans.

One more name has to be mentioned—Leni Riefenstahl. This former dancer and actress (she played in the Arnold Fanck mountain films) became by her friendship with the Fuehrer one of the outstanding people in the German film industry. Her *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympiad* films are well known. The ambitions of Leni Riefenstahl were not satisfied with the production of even such super documentaries. She owned her own firm, Olympia Film, founded with the private money of Hitler himself. Then she tried to get 1,000,000 marks (£50,000) from the Fuehrer for the production of a coloured feature film of *Lysistrata*. The film was never made.

By 1938, the fate of the small independent producer of documentary films seemed sealed. He

could perhaps get an agreement to make films for the Ufa company. If not, he could only sell his films to the remaining insignificant distributors, who required about 20 films a year, and to the American firms who wanted approximately the same number. (American films could import films into Germany and show them there provided that no Jews took any part in them. They could not, however, export the money they earned but could make German versions. These they were not allowed to show in Germany, but they were exported to German-speaking countries like Switzerland or the former Austria, from which they could export their earnings to America. The Americans paid for their documentary films with these earnings and in German currency.)

#### Non-theatrical Distribution

There were one or two other methods by which the independent producers could keep alive. The Nazis have always considered the film a very important way of influencing public opinion, and have also made full use of the film as a medium of public instruction. Thus the non-theatrical film requirements of various institutes and organisations were such that not even Ufa, with all its huge resources, could meet them.

For example, the State Educational Film Institute, already mentioned as a big pre-Nazi purchaser of Ufa product, was greatly expanded by the Nazis. In 1938 the budget of the Institute, which was controlled by the Ministry of Education, totalled 5 million marks. About 400 silent educational films of various kinds were needed, most of them for use in schools and universities. As almost all educational concerns in Germany are Government controlled, every student had to see those films the authorities decided upon. The films were generally of good quality, however, embracing almost every subject in the curriculum, and the teachers were very willing to show them.

The German Army and especially the Air Force use training films. Instructors made up for the lack of 'planes with films, in which were shown, for instance, the necessary procedure for handling the most modern type of bomber which had not yet been built. In this way the pilot knew a great deal about the machine before he even saw it. Companies making these films were few (Ufa, Stier, Doering, Stoecher) and were carefully watched by the Intelligence Department.

Because the Nazis believe in the words of their Fuehrer that his rule will last for a thousand years, Government Departments and sometimes Hitler in person order films about the development of the State from the beginning of the Nazi régime. As the State develops, so more films will be made so that generations to come will be able to see the whole process of National Socialism from the start. Films about the rebuilding of towns and the "liberation of unhappy neighbours" are made. For instance, Hitler ordered Ufa to produce a film about the rebuilding of Berlin. Ufa set up a special unit comprising a director and three cameramen who did nothing else but photograph the building operations through every stage.

[Continued on page 13]



# THE GAS INDUSTRY FILM LIBRARY

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## PART 2. DISTRIBUTION AND PROPAGANDA

The *Deutsche Reichsbahnzentrale für den Deutschen Reiseverkehr* (German Railways Central Touring Bureau) is the central office for all German propaganda in foreign countries. Its original task was tourist propaganda. ("Germany wants to see you".) The Nazis took over the Bureau and greatly expanded its activities to propagandise with all available media German policy, culture, ideas, country and people. From the first the most important propaganda medium was considered to be the film.

The Bureau's method of working is of interest. Although the German Railways give name and money to this vast organisation, which has branches in every country of the world and in most of the big towns, the Ministry of Information and Propaganda has control of the entire supervision, direction and management. All managers, assistants, clerks, especially those abroad, are Nazi party members and chosen by the Ministry. The General Manager is Dr Ritter Heiligenbrunner, an old party member. The film department is organised by Dr Renz, another old party member, who has spent much time abroad and knows England and America intimately. He is in touch with all producing firms and chooses the documentary films he thinks fit for his purpose from those made each year in Germany. By decree every producer must sell his films to the Bureau should this organisation want to buy them for distribution in foreign countries. As there is no other possibility for German producers to sell their films abroad, they are glad to earn extra money in this way. On the other hand, the Bureau gets its films very cheaply. It buys the negative of the picture and the music and adds the sound negative of the language concerned.

### The Bureau at Work

Here is an example of how the Bureau works. At the beginning of every year the manager of the American branch office in, say, Chicago, informs Berlin as to the number and kind of films he can best use. (In big countries the branch managers are independent; in smaller countries there is usually only one head office which controls the propaganda for the whole country.) When the Chicago manager receives the films, he gets in touch with the local distributors or with the proprietors of local cinemas and offers the films free. Their general technical quality and entertaining treatment usually secures a considerable showing.

The German Ministry of Information and Propaganda is very anxious to hide every kind of naked propaganda and does not encourage displays of swastikas and Nazi uniforms. They prefer films that present the gay side of German life, the beauty of the country, and films about the *Strength through Joy* movement. The improvement of social conditions—new housing schemes for workpeople—is a popular subject although the examples chosen are the exception and not the rule. The only office where small success was obtained was in London. "The English

mentality does not stand propaganda of this sort", said Dr Renz. When war broke out the Ministry was trying to push new films specially made for the British market.

Although the money spent on film for use abroad might be supposed to be enormous, the actual costs are relatively low. For example, the Bureau would probably buy the American rights of a German documentary film for about £50. The new sound track might cost £100. Copies would run to between £300 and £750. Thus the total cost of a film for America would be only about £1,000, all spent within Germany—a very important factor.

In any circumstances, the Nazis are convinced that the effect of film propaganda among the peoples of the world is worth far more than the money involved in their preparation.

## CORRESPONDENCE

SIR, I was surprised and very distressed to read the criticism of *The Stars Look Down* by 'a film critic'. It has been established that the optimum length for a concentrated film is in the neighbourhood of ninety minutes. In such a length of time it is quite impossible to present the whole of a complex theme such as is the basis of Dr Cronin's novel, unless one intends to produce a curiosity like M.G.M.'s *Gone with the Wind*. It would perhaps be better to stop talking about the film of a book—better perhaps to refer to the film inspired by a book.

The critic seems to think that Trade Unions are collections of angels and that the working class (a hypothetical abstraction in any case) cannot produce intellectuals; this is not an unusual combination of opinions, but I cannot for the life of me see why Carol Reed's film should be condemned for presenting another view. To say that the people of the mining town are people of the studio seems to me to be sheer nonsense—unless I have lived in a studio all my life. The documentary qualities of this film are its most surprising and pleasing points. The first real piece of Cinema produced by the British commercial studios deserves better treatment than this, surely.

JOHN W. MAY

Thornton Heath, Surrey

## FILM FORUM

FILM FORUM, a periodical published by the Federation of Scottish Film Societies, makes a welcome reappearance. The new issue contains among other articles, an admirable policy statement by Norman Wilson, a review of Film Society activities, and a detailed article on the supply of foreign films during wartime. It is gratifying to find a paper catering solely for the specialised needs and interests of the Film Society movement. *Film Forum* costs 2d., and can be obtained from 135 George Street, Edinburgh.

## FRANCO-BRITISH ALLIANCE

An Officer of the film division of the Service d'Information de Londres discusses its aims.

PROPAGANDA is a word which is as distasteful to the French mind as it is to the British. Moreover, it is a misleading expression, since it conveys with it an idea which is the very negation of any permanent and true understanding.

In the words of M Jean Giraudoux, head of the French Information Ministry, French propaganda in Great Britain should be done by the English, just as British propaganda in France should be done by the French. The implication of this is that official groups in London or in Paris should confine themselves to assisting each other in the best and most efficient presentation of their mutual case. For instance, one of the main tasks of the French film section should be to make suggestions to the competent authorities as to the sort of films which should be shown in France about England, and also as to the various aspects of French activities or life which should be shown in Britain.

In Britain, films play a greater part perhaps than in any European country. Important events are often conveyed to the great mass of the people almost exclusively through the medium of films or photographs; millions of people in Britain keep themselves informed in this way. Yet it is remarkable how little the average man in France or Britain knows of the other's country.

In the course of the last two years various French films have come to London, and some of them were real documentaries of French life or psychology, such as *Les Otages*, which has just been revived in London. Unfortunately, such pictures are confined only too often to specialised audiences; there is a lot to be done in widening the appeal of French films in Britain and British films in France. In time we Frenchmen hope to reach the British Empire. What, for example, does the average citizen of Australia or New Zealand know about France? Newsreels, documentaries and, last but not least, feature films are among the most important instruments for doing this work, and each medium has its own particular possibilities. Newsreels may compel people to think of the other fellow's lot, but only documentaries or features can create a deeper knowledge and a closer understanding of each other's people and country. A good peacetime documentary showing the real life of real people, for example *North Sea*, may have a more lasting effect than any number of purely topical subjects, however arresting these may be.

As to feature films, it seems that past experiences and the mutual expectations of the people in France and in Britain indicate that each country should endeavour to show real people, workers, peasants, bourgeois, in their real settings, the workshops, the farm, the office, with their national and traditional characteristics as a background. Such is the broad policy of the French film department in its effort to bring a closer understanding between our two people.



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# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

THE FILM SOCIETY season is now approaching its end, and in general no more need be said than that the enterprise and courage of the Societies is a matter for congratulation. From reports received from all over the country it seems likely that all the societies now operating will open up again next autumn. DNL will be glad to give help or information to Film Societies making plans for next season. We have had several reports regarding the difficulty of obtaining certain foreign films, such as *La Femme du Boulanger*. It is not easy to find a way of dealing with the vagaries of distributors, and difficulties of this sort make it all the more regrettable that efforts to form a really comprehensive Federation (with a permanent executive in London) have hitherto failed. Only in this way could really useful action be taken in such cases.

A number of valuable suggestions have been made regarding DNL's Film Society Page. The most general recommendation has been that the full programmes of all societies should be published every month, with editorial or analytical notes when necessary. This plan would need the closest cooperation on the part of Secretaries, and would involve notification of programmes in advance whenever possible. DNL hopes to start some such service as soon as it is feasible.

**London.** For their second programme of the season the **London Film Institute Film Society** showed Brunius' short *Violons d'Ingres*, a film about hobbies made for showing at the New York World's Fair. The feature was Renoir's *Toni* (a review of which appears on page 16).

The **London Scientific Film Society** gave its third performance on March 10th and showed seven films, ranging from studies of *Colloids in Medicine* and *Psychology Today* to Rotha's *Face of Britain* and Anstey's *Enough to Eat*. The policy of this society is admirable in that it deliberately seeks to foster the idea of the scientist's place in the community, rather than to narrow down its programmes to exclusively academic and technical subjects. It might be a good idea for some of the major provincial societies to link up with the Scientific Film Society. All the L.S.F.S. programmes are designed to interest laymen as well as scientists.

In this connection secretaries might well get hold of a copy of the annual report of the **Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers**. This Committee was formed some two years ago to further the interests of the scientific film, and to act as an advisory body to any organisation desiring information in this field.

To this end an expert Viewing Committee has been appointed, and a list of scientific films has been issued, graded according to subject matter, type, technical treatment and suitability both for general and specialist exhibition.

A card-index of all films seen is kept at the head office of the A.S.W. with a review of each prepared by the Viewing Committee. The subject matter includes agriculture, engineering, health,

transport, zoology, chemistry, aeronautics, archaeology, biology, physiology, mathematics, physics and sociology.

The Committee is ready to plan film shows for branches of the A.S.W. and other interested bodies, and eight such shows were arranged in 1939, in London, Cambridge, Liverpool, Oxford and Rugby.

The services performed by the Scientific Films Committee, not at the moment widely known, are of great value and their expertly prepared records provide a source of unequalled information and reference.

Any organisation wishing to make use of the work that is being done should communicate with the Secretary, the Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, London, W.C.1.

**Aberdeen** reports that its membership this season is 489, which is only 60 short of last season's figure. As in previous years, it was arranged to hold six exhibitions. The last exhibition was held on March 17th when the films *Hostages* and *The First Days* were shown. The fact that the membership of the Society showed such a small decrease as the result of the outbreak of the war leads to the confident expectation that an equally good membership will be obtained next season. At all events, there seems to be little danger of the Society having to suspend its activities.

**Dundee & St Andrews** recently showed *Love on the Wing* and *Trois Valses*. They have a large student membership and in view of the approaching University holidays the final show has been fixed for April 14th. Many local members are engaged in work of national importance, A.R.P., etc., involving Sunday duty, and the cancellation of the shows in St Andrews (see DNL, March) proved a blessing in disguise to local members, as at their request there are both afternoon and evening performances in Dundee, thus enabling members to see the shows during their off-duty times. Evidence of the success of this procedure is given by the increase of the number of performances from six to nine.

**Ayrshire** has had a good season and is hopeful on prospects for the autumn. Writes the Secretary: "Assuming that there is no drastic alteration in conditions in this country we will be carrying on, and I think, despite many pessimistic prophets, that there is probably an ample supply of films in the country at the moment from which to book the programmes for at least four or five other meetings."

**Lochaber**, in addition to its usual programmes, gave a show of 16 mm. silent films at the Highland Hotel, Fort William, during March. The evening was partly a social occasion and was a good opportunity for members to discuss and criticise the season's films. The secretary also reports that there is some hope of reviving the **Inverness Film Society**, as during the war the number of potential members may well be higher than ever before.

Recent programmes of the **Manchester & Salford Film Society** included Cavalcanti's *Men in Danger* and *The City*, Pabst's *Drame de Shanghai*, and Len Lye's *Lambeth Walk* and *Colour Flight*. Substandard shows included *The Rape of Czechoslovakia*, followed by a lecture by the director, Jiri Weiss; John Taylor's *The Londoners*, and Ralph Bond's *Voice of the People*.

The **Oxford Film Society** recently celebrated its fiftieth performance with a very eclectic programme including Ruttmann's *Berlin* and Ophul's *Tendre Ennemie*. The membership of this Society is largely of undergraduates and senior members of the University; Oxford residents are also members.

The **Edinburgh Film Guild**, although "exposed to the dangers of the front line", has had a good season of eight performances (a modification of its peacetime programmes) and the membership is 500. Films shown include *Mort du Cygne*, *Storm in a Teacup* and *The Rich Bride*.

We learn that in addition to **Bryanston School** (see DNL March) both **Eton** and **Charterhouse** run flourishing film societies. The latter's is open to members of the general public.

The **Merseyside Film Institute Society** reports that its shows of *Hostages* and *Burgtheater* both had an attendance of 1,400. Four lectures have been given on "The Films in Education", "The Film in World Conditions", "The Film in International Understanding", and "Social Implications". A film lecture on Charlie Chaplin's career was also given by Prof. Lyon Bleas. This Society is now collaborating with the Council of Social Service in the provision of a panel of lecturers for unemployed centres, boys' clubs, and similar groups.

**Belfast's** second repertory show included *Retour à l'Aube*, supported by documentaries and early silent films. A third show is planned this month.

## ROLL CALL

(The following is, to the best of our knowledge, a complete list of Film Societies at present in existence):

Aberdeen	Lochaber
Ayrshire	London Film Institute
Belfast	London Scientific
Birmingham	Manchester & Salford
Bryanston	Merseyside
Charterhouse	Oban
Dublin	Oxford
Dundee	Sheffield
Edinburgh	Street
Eton	Tyneside
Exeter	Wolverhampton
Liverpool	

## FEDERATION

The **Federation of Scottish Film Societies** is meeting in Glasgow on April 27th to discuss summer activities and future plans. On the same day is the final adjudication and performance of the entries for the Scottish Film Festival.



## FOREIGN FILMS

(All films recommended in this column are the latest continentals viewable in London, and are in our opinion suitable for Film Society showing. We are unable to indicate at what dates they will be available for booking.)

*Toni.* Production: Marcel Pagnol. Direction: Jean Renoir. Photography: Claude Renoir. Distribution: not fixed.

FIVE YEARS old, this film presented privately by the energetic London Film Institute Society, must surely rank as one of the most successful attempts to blend fictional story, professional actors and studio sets with natural background and real people. The story, dealing in personal issues, is unimportant; the direction, treatment and acting are some of the best that have ever come from France. Renoir's technical ease has been admired in *La Grande Illusion* and *La Bête Humaine*, and those films also displayed his mastery of handling what one can only call "intimate" situations. In *Toni* there is this display, but something of a more profound character than in later Renoir films, perhaps because the workaday people in the South-East corner of France with whom the story deals are less complex and inhibited than the people of the other stories. Here is poetry of a kind seldom seen on the screen; a use of background both in general and in particular to heighten the conflict of human feelings and behaviour. Technically, the use of visuals and sound must rank among the

best. Five years in cinema is five generations in other spheres, but Renoir's film has no date. It might have been made yesterday and that in itself is a thing one can say about few films. Recommended strongly to all film societies.

## Canadian Government Films in Production, January, 1940

- 1 A Canadian epilogue to the British film *The Warning*, produced in Britain before the outbreak of war to instruct the public in methods of air-raid defence.
- 2 French versions of two recently released government films—*Heritage* and *The Royal Visit*—for distribution in French speaking areas.
- 3 Two Youth Training films, directed by Stuart Legg, and completed only last autumn, being brought up-to-date in the light of war conditions.
- 4 A series of six educational films dealing with the human geography of Canada.
- 5 Three non-theatrical films on the economic fronts of Canada scheduled. (Timber, wheat, mining.)
- 6 *The People of Canada*, describing the various groups comprising the population of the Dominion.
- 7 *Undefended Frontier* (working title of a picture discussing the boundary between Canada and the United States.)
- 8 A series on Canadian sports.
- 9 A film on the McKenzie River District.

## NEWS FROM STAFFORDSHIRE

By the Secretary of the Burslem & District Industrial Co-operative Society.

IN STOKE-ON-TRENT there has been organised this winter a Secondary Schools' Film Association which is open to all secondary school pupils in North Staffordshire. Eleven schools were circularised, and six responded by sending along pupils and teachers. In spite of a late and hurried beginning, the scattered nature of the area and the blackout, about 150 enthusiastic youngsters turn up each month. The difficulty of obtaining a centrally situated room that was blacked out was solved by the local Co-operative Society who generously loaned a room and most excellent projection apparatus.

Among the films shown so far have been cartoons, Chaplins, *Weather Forecast*, *Night Mail*, *Big Money*, *New Worlds for Old*, *The Covered Wagon* and lastly and most successfully, *Kameradschaft*. At our next meeting Miss Mary Field is to give a lecture, while in April the programme is to consist of *Shipyards*, a "Popeye", *Buried Treasure*, *Private Life of the Gannets*, *A.B.C. of Oil* and *Plan for Living*.

So far not much film appreciation (i.e., direct instruction how to look at and appreciate films critically; *Ed.*) has been indulged in, because it is believed that good films such as *Kameradschaft* are eloquent of themselves; when more of these have been shown, the children will be more than anxious to learn about film appreciation.

## WE ARE EIGHT

In 1932 Hitler was not in power. In 1932 the documentary film was in its infancy.

In 1932 the first number of SIGHT & SOUND was published . . .

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Cinema Today.** D. A. Spencer and H. D. Waley. *Sir Humphrey Milford and Oxford University Press.* 4s. 6d.

THIS IS A short, technical survey of film-making, primarily intended for the general reader. It has an interesting introductory history of film apparatus and gives a broad account of film-stock and processing, cameras, sound-recording, colour processes, stereoscopy, and sub-standard problems. Although concerned almost entirely with apparatus and method, it crams a good deal of common sense into two final chapters on the film's position today and as a social force. If these two chapters were to precede the technical description, the book would have a better balance. As it is, useful diagrams and some excellent illustrations make "The Cinema Today" a well-produced book at its price.

**Hollywood is the Place.** Charles Landery. *Dent.* 10s. 6d.

THIS MIGHT have been just another book about Hollywood. It has the usual anecdotes and funny stories about the big shots (including a new one of the 2,000 dollar a week executive who owed his position to his outstanding skill on horseback). There are the usual dark hints about the sex life of the local population. There is the inevitable description of an Aimee Semple McPherson revival meeting.

The book's merit lies in the fact that it does record that in Hollywood there are great numbers of ordinary people who work damned hard—when they are permitted to work at all—for a totally inadequate reward. Mr Landery shows us the statistical workings of Central Casting with its 12,000 registered extras of whom only 350 are continuously employed. Behind the mathematical equation is the human being, and Mr Landery allows us to meet the human being and to learn a little about how an extra scrapes along.

Steve Dunning, 30 years old, married and one daughter, is a studio electrician or *juicer*. "Look", he says, "you can't blame me for getting hot under the collar. I work like a nigger. I sweat. And for what? A dollar twenty-one an hour. And what's more I don't get steady work and there never will be a future to it."

Then there is Bert, the stunt man. "Our Union has fixed the minimum pay at \$35 per eight-hour day with overtime if worked, no matter how simple the stunt". Most of the stunts don't seem too simple.

We would have liked this book a whole lot more if it had stuck to the human stories about the real people in Hollywood. But what there is of them is good.

**Filming for Amateurs.** Paul Burnford, A.R.P.S., with a preface by Paul Rotha. *Pitman.* 12s. 6d.

THIS IS A good book. It is not a long book (the text only runs to about 30,000 words), but Mr Burnford writes crisply, and gives the maximum of information in the minimum of space. The book will be most useful to the amateur who knows what a shooting script is, realises that he needs one if he is to make a film rather than a

haphazard collection of shots, but is not very familiar with the tricks of the trade by which he can get the effects he desires. For such a man, it would hardly be possible to pick a passage of a hundred words that did not give useful information.

The book contains 58 well-printed reproductions of actual shots which are accompanied by captions giving the reasons for the arrangement and technical proceeding adopted. The lessons to be learned from these plates will be as fruitful as those found in the text.

Finally a word of praise to the publishers, who have produced an excellent piece of typography. It is a pity, however, that there are one or two small errors, such as f. 28 for (presumably) f. 2.8, a mis-spelling of René Clair's name, and, oddly enough, of the author on both cover and jacket.

**America at the Movies.** Margaret Thorp. *Yale University Press.* \$2.75.

THIS IS A well-documented, balanced and very nicely written study of exploitation methods and public relations policies in the American film business. The subject is of first-line importance for any understanding of the film industry and the social influence of the cinema in this country. American films arrive here trailing clouds of glory from a coast to coast build-up which inevitably influence British critical and public reaction. Some day, too, perhaps the British industry may set about emulating the magnificently self-assured enthusiasm of the American industry. We are already familiar with tie-ups with hairdressers, biscuit manufacturers and newspapers; and on occasions exhibitors manage to get the help of local territorials, civic dignitaries and churches in selling a film. On the obverse side are Sonja Henje's films popularising ice-skating and films like Warner Brothers' *Zola* creating a demand for new editions and reprints of classics, pushing up book sales and library borrowings by hundreds of thousands. It would seem that there is no film that a determined publicity department cannot sell and that there is nothing that films cannot sell, whether it be anti-fascism or family life, lipsticks, Shakespeare or sofas "like the one in Bette Davis's drawing-room in *Dark Victory*." But there are limits. There's the Hay Office, the National Legion of Decency and a hundred smaller organised minorities whose power we over here hardly realise. And there are the men and women who go to the movies who, in spite of the barrage of campaigns, stunts, slogans and insinuations laid down by publicity departments, exhibitors and fan-journalists and in spite of the defences erected for them by public and private political and moral censors, can and do still make their voices heard. Illuminating in this connection are extracts from the Hays Office Reports for 1938 and 1939 quoted by Margaret Thorp on which she makes this comment: "Significant as the change is from glorying in 'escapist entertainment' to glorying in 'pictures that dramatise present-day social conditions' this second report of Mr Hays is not a battle cry, but an official recognition of a force which had at last grown too strong to be ignored."

## PEOPLE AND PLANS

William Farr has joined the Editorial Board of D.N.L. He was assistant director of the Film Institute and edited *Sight and Sound*. For the past two years he has been distribution officer of the Petroleum Films Bureau.

Alistair Cooke, one time B.B.C. film critic and well known for his broadcasts to England from America, has joined the staff of the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

A new documentary production unit, Real-film Productions Inc., has been set up in America. John Ferno, co-director of *The Four Hundred Million* with Joris Ivens, is in charge of production.

Miss Margery Locket, lately in charge of the G.B. Instructional Films Bureau, has joined the Films Department of the Ministry of Information.

We welcome Mr P. H. Siriex to London. He is film liaison officer between the Ministry of Information and the Commissariat Général à Service d'Information of Paris. His headquarters are the Service d'Information de Londres, Queensberry Way, S.W.7. The work of the Service d'Information de Londres is reviewed on page 13.

The French documentary director, J. B. Brunius, has been granted leave from the French Army to come to England. He is working at the G.P.O. Film Unit, and hopes to direct films in England for France. He will also be handling French versions of English films. He was responsible for "Violons d'Ingres" shown at the French Pavilion of the New York World's Fair and at the March performance of the Film Institute Film Society.

# WORLD FILM NEWS

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H. A hire charge is made.  
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**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, and their distributors, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films to prospective users.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, & the manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. This catalogue is for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of at least a 100 sound & silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute** 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library*. An important collection of documentary & other films. Available only to full members of B.F.I. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Some British and Foreign Documentary and other Short Films*. A general list of films & distributors. (c) *Early Films*. A list of early films still available in Britain.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Educational General Services**, Little Holt, Merton Lane, Highgate, N.6. A wide selection of films of all kinds, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available only through members of the Association. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Films primarily of Empire interest. With a useful subject index. 16 mm. & a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Ensign Film Library**, 88-89 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Wide selection of all types of films including fiction, comedies, documentaries, films of geography, animal life, industry. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. & a few St. H.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm., St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items of general

interest. Includes *Inside Nazi Germany*, *New Schools for Old*, *America Thinks it Over*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding & surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical & educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American & German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Twenty technical & documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, 104 High Holborn, W.C.1. Films of religious and temperance appeal, also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not available elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 10 Park Place, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work* & Pollard's *Dragon of Wales*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), & films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Strand Film Company**, 5A Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2. Eleven films available for non-theatrical distribution including *Aerial Milestones* (historical survey of British civil aviation), *Chapter and Verse* (survey of books and writers), *Give the Kids a Break*, & a number of others of Empire and general interest, including 3 silent Airways films. Mostly 35 mm. Sd. A few 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Henton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. The sound film catalogue contains a number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, & some interest shorts. The silent 16 mm. catalogue contains a first-class list of early American, German & Russian silent features and shorts. The 9.5 catalogue has a number of early German films & a wide selection of early American & English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association**, 145 Wardour Street, W.1. Films of democratic & co-operative interest, with a selection of films from other sources. Notes & suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for outright sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

## CATALOGUE OF THE MONTH

**G.B.I. Films. List 5**. Issued free, by Gaumont-British Instructional Films Bureau, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.

This handbook selects and describes those 16 mm. films most likely to interest schools, from the larger Gebescope catalogue. It is handier to use because of its classification and the index of titles which has now been added. Teaching Guides are available, price 3d., and teachers can check the content and quality of films by the reviews in the Bulletins of the British Film Institute and the Scottish Educational Films Association.

The first and longest section of the handbook gives detailed notes describing each film, and a key letter indicates for which section of the school audience it is designed. Films are listed under subjects, and in each subject silent films are given separately. The junior school teacher will find especially valuable the group of silent films on *Food from the Sea and Earth* and

*Great Changes*. Among other subjects, biology and natural history are plentifully served; many interesting films have been added to this section. A generous proportion of films is given to Geography, but the small group of History films has not been increased and the Language section remains minute. This scarcity, one understands, is due, not to a lack of good-will, but to a very sensible reluctance to take risks without hope of a response from teachers. It is, nevertheless, unfortunate that the language and culture of France is practically unrepresented in the non-theatrical film, and one feels that the resources of such an organisation as the Alliance Française might be mobilised in this connection. The catalogue lists all films now available for hire; information about future projects, particularly of possible dates when the new "Secrets of Life" films in Dufaycolor will be issued for non-theatrical purposes, would have been welcome.



## IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BE SINCERE

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CINEMA AUDIENCES, fed on a Goldwyn-Wanger-Zanuck-Selznick diet, expect their films to have 'spit and polish'. Nature (or truth) in the raw appeals to them more if the make-up is by Max Factor.

A PROPAGANDA MESSAGE, no matter how righteously conceived and carefully prepared, loses force in a film unless that film can stand up to technical standards of quality created by Hollywood. A public educated on Mae West wants form as well as content.

THE TECHNICAL PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT of Merton Park Studios ensure that a film made there will pass the high standard of quality essential if a short film is to stand on its own merits alongside Garbo, Clark Gable, Robert Taylor and Donald Duck. Only by insisting on such a high standard do we ensure that the films we produce achieve the objects for which they have been made.

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**MERTON PARK STUDIOS LIMITED**



# **STRAND CELEBRATES ITS 5th ANNIVERSARY**

## **IN FIVE YEARS**

**STRAND HAS:** made 50 first-flight documentary films

**STRAND HAS:** substantially helped to open up the cinemas to documentary films

## **STRAND HAS: worked for:—**

The National Book Council, the National Council of Social Service, the Federated Malay States Government, Imperial Airways, British Airways, the Great Western Railway, the Southern Railway, Petroleum Films Bureau, Film Centre, Colonial Empire Marketing Board, Films of Scotland Committee, the British Council, the National Fitness Council, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Labour, the British Medical Association, the Royal National Life-Boat Institution, the Ulster Tourist Association, the Land Settlement Association, the League of Nations, the Air Ministry, the Workers' Travel Association, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Shell Marketing Company.

## **STRAND THANKS:**

Its past producers, PAUL ROTH and STUART LEGG, and welcomes ALEXANDER SHAW to this position, all of whom have contributed so much to the Company's success.

Its permanent staff and those documentary producers and directors who have worked on individual films.

The progressive members of the film trade who have encouraged its work.

## **STRAND STARTS ITS ANNIVERSARY YEAR WITH FIVE NEW PRODUCTIONS IN WORK**

DONALD F. TAYLOR, MANAGING DIRECTOR

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